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International Narcotics

STAFF NOTES

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INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS

This publication is prepared by analysts in the Directorate of Intelligence for specialists in the Washington community who are interested in international narcotics matters. It will be published on an ad hoc basis, but not more frequently than once each week. Comments and queries are welcome and should be directed to the author of the individual article.

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SECRET**Golden Triangle: No. 4 Heroin Traffic Expands**

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Reported shipments of pure white No. 4 heroin from refineries located along the Burma-Thailand border totaled 1,700 kilograms during the first nine months of 1976. This compares with a total of only 700 kilograms during the same period in 1975 and a total of 1,500 kilograms for the entire year.

The increased supply of No. 4 heroin during 1976 has also been reflected in price trends. Wholesale prices in the tri-border area--Laos-Burma-Thailand--during September 1976 were more than 30 percent below the level of September 1975. In consumer markets of Burma, September prices were down about 15 percent from a year ago, while in Bangkok, the major Thai market, the price remained at about the same level.

Thirty-six percent of the No. 4 heroin reportedly shipped from the border area during the first three quarters of 1976 was destined for consumer markets in Burma. Bangkok was the major market for at least 20 percent of No. 4 heroin shipments.

It now appears that the bulk of the No. 4 heroin produced in the Golden Triangle is actually being consumed within Southeast Asia. For example, a recent report indicated the No. 4 heroin requirement for addicts in Bangkok totaled about 4,600 kilograms annually. Although the total requirement for No. 4 heroin in Southeast Asia is not known, reported export totals thus far in 1976 appear to underestimate significantly the actual quantities involved.

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BRIEFS

NORWAY: Sixteen kilos of heroin were seized at the Oslo Airport on December 4, and 17 grams of pure heroin plus some hashish were seized near Bergen on December 17. These seizures of heroin have significantly raised the Norwegians' awareness of their increasing drug problem and have resulted in both popular and official demands for stronger anti-narcotics measures by the government. The major concern heretofore has been that Norway had become a transit point on the Far East to Western Europe trafficking route; it is now apparent that hard drugs from this trafficking are finding their way into the increasingly affluent Norwegian society.

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WEST GERMANY: There has been a 500-percent increase in the amount of heroin--primarily Asian-- seized in the Federal Republic of Germany during the past year, according to a recent report from the embassy in Bonn. German authorities also report a significant increase in the number of deaths from drug overdose during the past year--from a total of 188 in 1975 to 300 during the first eleven months of 1976. Heroin seizures in other West European countries are also up. About 100 kilograms of Asian heroin were seized in Copenhagen during 1976, and, during the first eleven months of 1976, 160 kilograms of heroin were seized in the Netherlands. Recent seizures appear to be having a significant impact on the local drug market in the Netherlands. A Dutch official noted recently that there had been a 400-percent increase in the price of gram lots of heroin. He cautioned, however, that the price increase may be only temporary.

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FINLAND: Finnish Customs officials seized 11 kilograms of "almost pure" heroin at Helsinki Seutula Airport on December 14. A man and woman traveling on Singapore passports were apprehended in the case. The Number Three heroin was discovered in 28 cans which bore labels in various languages identifying the contents as fruit, clams, and beans. The investigation was prompted when Customs officials became suspicious of the unusual itinerary and the strange behavior of the pair. This is the largest single seizure of illicit drugs ever made in Finland; previous seizures of heroin have been measured in tens of grams. Finnish drug control authorities estimate that the street value of the 11 kilograms would be about \$8,000,000, and the wholesale value would be slightly less than \$1,000,000. The Finns speculate that the heroin was in transit to distribution points in Central Europe and that recent tightening of drug controls in Stockholm and Oslo may have diverted the heroin to Helsinki. [redacted]

BURMA: An opium caravan that could be carrying up to 6.5 metric tons of raw opium may already have left the northern Shan State of Burma destined for a location near the Burma-Thailand border where it will be processed by a clandestine "laboratory." [redacted]

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[redacted] If it left at the appointed time and is unimpeded by the Burmese Army, it should arrive at the proposed destination within the next few days. [redacted]

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COLOMBIA: Some major Colombian drug trafficking groups are moving their operations away from major urban areas, according to recent Drug Enforcement Agency intelligence information. They apparently are dispersing their clandestine cocaine laboratories because of the increased law enforcement activity in and around some of the major urban centers. [redacted]

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LAOS: The Lao government recently offered to sell 100 metric tons of opium to Japan and indicated an interest in making additional sales in subsequent years, although not necessarily in the quantity of 100 tons. The Japanese estimate that the proposed sale represents about two years' production and speculated that the Laotian government may have had a considerable stockpile at the time the proposal was made. A sale of this magnitude would constitute a gross violation of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs by the Laotian government. [redacted]

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IRAN: The Iranian government is considering the establishment of a new narcotics control organization which would encompass treatment and rehabilitation, international liaison, and eventually--although not immediately--law enforcement. The creation of the suggested organization apparently is still some months away; even the initial planning indicates that the Iranian government is beginning to realize the scope of the Iranian addiction problem and the necessity of tightening international controls. Meanwhile, Tehran has indicated a greater willingness to contribute to the support of UN-sponsored projects related to the narcotics control effort and is expected to offer \$4-5,000,000 to help finance projects currently being considered or actually underway by the UN. [redacted]

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BRAZIL: The President of Brazil has signed into law new legislation designed to better control drug abuse in Brazil. The new anti-drug law, among other things, stiffens penalties for traffickers; lowers penalties for simple possession; introduces a new philosophy in the treatment and rehabilitation of addicts; provides for expulsion of foreigners who commit drug offenses; and takes an initial step toward the creation of a professional class in the narcotics enforcement sector of the Federal Police. [redacted]

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INTERESTING READING

*Drug Trafficking Reaches Unprecedented Proportions (AUSTRALIA)--TNDD, * No. 278, December 30, 1976, p. 8.*

Narcotics Dealers "Mushrooming" (BURMA)--TNDD, No. 278, p. 15.

Strong Measures Recommended for Drug Addicts (MALAYSIA--TNDD, No. 278, pp. 18-20.

Addiction Among Mexican Youths (MEXICO)--TNDD, No. 278, pp. 46-52.

Reports on Narcotics Activities (HONG KONG)--TNDD, GUO 12/76, December 23, 1976, pp. 1-5.

Drugs, Weapons Uncovered in Police Raid (JAPAN)--TNDD, GUO 12/76, pp. 18-22.

Belgian Police Make Large Drug Haul (BELGIUM)--TNDD, No. 277, December 23, 1976, pp. 35-36.

Four Jailed for Running Drug Factory (UNITED KINGDOM)--TNDD, No. 277, pp. 40-42.

Heroin Addiction Reaches Epidemic Proportions (UNITED KINGDOM)--TNDD, No. 277, p. 43.

Plans For Increasing Opium Production, Exports Outlined (INDIA)--TNDD, No. 276, December 16, 1976, pp. 1-2.

Record Hashish Crop in Lebanon (LEBANON)--TNDD, No. 276, pp. 27-28.

Florence Becoming Another Drug Center (ITALY)--TNDD, No. 276, pp. 34-35.

Brisk Drug Business Yields 200 Million Kroner (SWEDEN)--TNDD, No. 276, pp. 39-43.

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